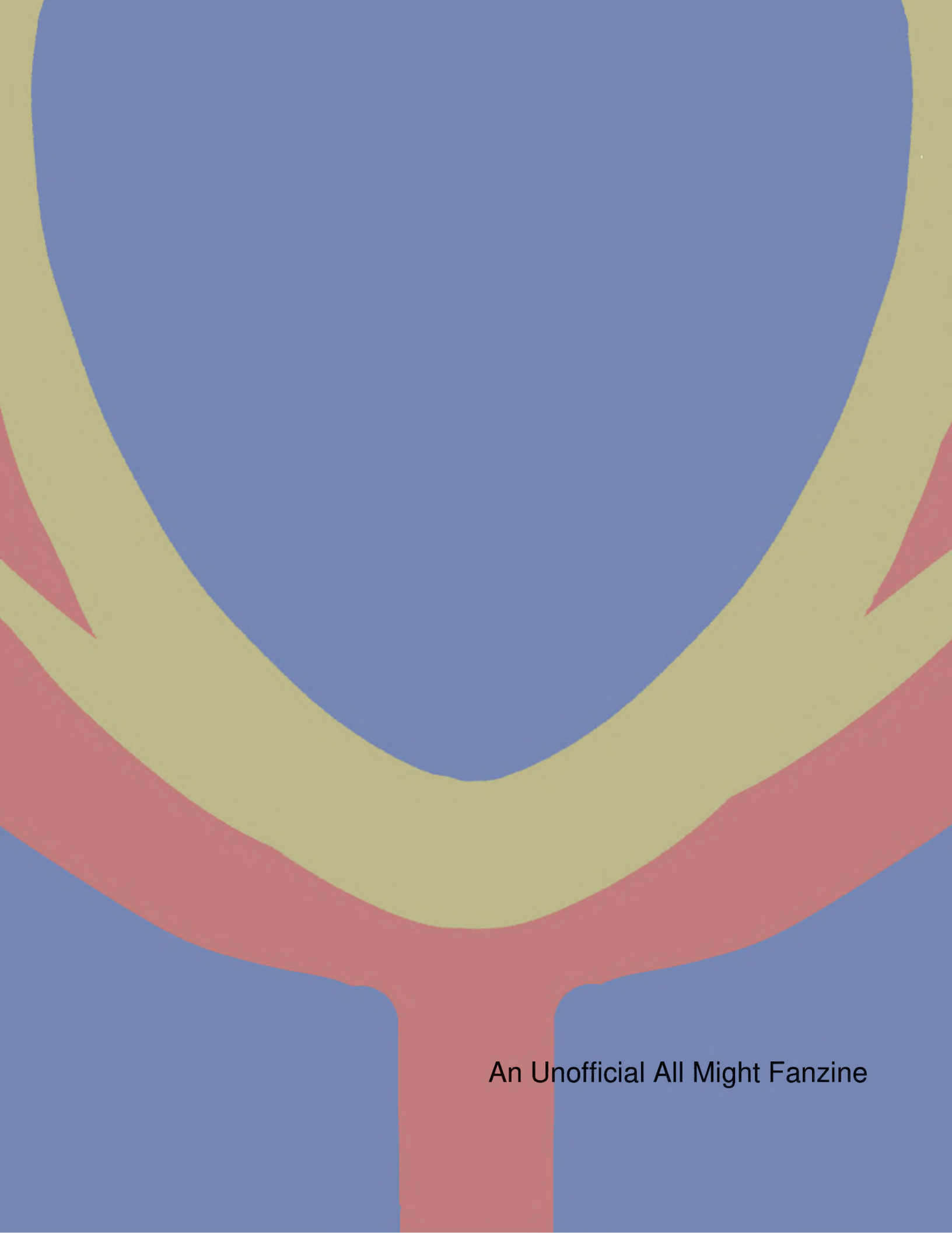


I AM HERE!



**AN ALL MIGHT
ANTHOLOGY**



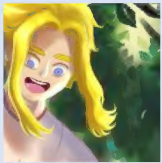
An Unofficial All Might Fanzine

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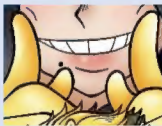


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A Hero in the Making

Nate Nox

Toshinori Yagi rolls off his futon to the tinny sound of a power ballad pumping out from his bedside radio and alarm clock. Today's going to be a great day! He takes his lanky body through a series of bodyweight fitness exercises, grabbing a protein bar before heading out to the park, where he'll complete his daily jog and a few more exercises along the waterfront.

Heroes are always ready to train! Especially those who don't *exactly* have quirks of their own. It's a minor setback, sure. But Toshinori won't let that stop him! He's going to be as heroic and strong as he can be, trusting that the universe can always use a few more good guys.

Knobbly knees rise and fall as Toshinori tries to improve on his pace. He's going into his final year of middle school, and his Ma swears he's going to fill out any day now! Heck, with all his training, he'd put on some muscle last year, but then he hit a winter growth spurt and all that progress was eaten up when he shot up 16 centimeters in a little over a month. So Toshinori continues to work, doing his sit ups and jumping jacks, his sprints and jogs, his beachside runs and somewhat wobbly pull-ups.

Each part of this self-improvement plan is dictated by the "Max Steel's (Un)Official Ultimate FBI Training Series! XTreme!" tape that he got at a swap meet two summers ago, and which has lived in his walkman ever since. Heavily accented American English pumps through his earphones, encouraging him to go beyond! To complete each exercise while visualizing how his improved body will help him protect the weak and defend against the wrong.

He even has a red, white, and blue sweatband to aid his "American-style superhero" visualizations for the future. Sweaty but pleased (he cut 1.5 seconds from his mile time!), Toshinori gathers up his gym bag and takes a cool-down lap over to his middle school. Another day is about to begin, and that means he's one day closer to his dreams!



Academics are *not* Toshinori's strong suit. He does decently, but only because he works so damn hard. Nothing comes easy, except math. In every other subject, Toshinori studies longer, asks more questions, and works harder to make sure that he's training his brain just as hard as his body. After all, crime solving requires a good mind too! A real eye for detail, and the ability to think logically.

For example, just now, he's solving the mystery of the crumpled up pieces of paper that are bouncing off the back of his head. The suspects: the six students that sit behind him. Based on the velocity of the throws (and the scrawled comic of a stick-figure Toshinori inside the papers), he suspects Marco. Or maybe Jin. The motive: No doubt more misunderstanding of Toshinori's lofty goals. The verdict: He will have to have *yet another* heart-to-heart with his

peers. Perhaps he is not explaining himself adequately. Part of a hero's job is to inspire and motivate others, so this is an excellent training opportunity!

He refuses to believe they mean any real harm, but they *are* making a mess. And some of the comics were becoming rather crude. He shudders to imagine dear Mrs. Ito picking up the rather lewd drawing of Toshinori fulfilling what is certainly *not* part of his volunteer duties.

The talks do not go particularly well. It's strange-- he senses no malice in the three culprits of the paper hail incident, yet they continue to needle him about his plans for the future.

"Look man, you know we're just kidding around...but are you serious about this hero stuff? I mean, why not be a peace officer or something instead? Aiming for the top is just...not the right move. Not for guys like us, ya know? Why not skip your 'training' and hang with us at the Arcade?"

Quirk-users are still a minority in Japan, but among the youth, the ratio has evened out to a 50/50 split, and it seems obvious that quirks will soon be the new norm. Special hero schools have started opening up, so Toshinori doesn't understand why his friends don't believe in themselves, or in him. Just because they're from a poorer district, just because they don't happen to have quirks...

That doesn't mean they can't change the world. Toshinori just needs to prove it to them! He'll be an example that they can all follow. As always, he skips the arcade in favor of cleaning the halls of his school, baggy safety vest and cleaning kit rounding out his "hero costume."

Once the halls are gleaming, he allows himself a moment of genuine joy. Everyone says he can't be a hero. Even his parents don't get this super-themed mania. But he's already doing it, isn't he? Heroes are just people dedicated to making their communities better places, and he's doing everything he can to meet that ideal. Even when--No, *especially when* it requires sacrifice on his part. His run-down school is a nicer place, thanks to his ceaseless efforts. Younger students come into the school and feel a sense of pride, rather than shame. They don't know anything about the graffiti and trash-strewn pit this place was just two years ago. That's a change that Toshinori made, all on his own...and now he's inspired others to carry the torch and keep their school polished into the future. He waves at his two junior volunteers as he leaves for the evening, pride swelling in his chest.

Real change. Real improvement. And it only costs him an hour and a half of free time each day.

What a bargain.

Onto the next task then!



The end of Toshinori's (extended) school day does not spell the end of his service. Oh no, not at all. Another important part of hero work is helping the less able of society, and who deserves more respectful service than the honored elders of Japan? Over the years, Toshinori has

developed a robust route of fragile elders who require the aid of a strapping young man (mostly for carrying groceries). Today, he is scheduled for the Sunset Palace complex, where he has three different grannies (and one grandpa) in need of general handiness and package hauling.

He buzzes up to his first “rescue,” the sweet as pie Mr. and Mrs. Sakura.

“I am here! Er, that is, Toshinori Yagi! Here to help with that gutter cleaning you mentioned last week! Sir! And Ma’am.”

There’s a lozenge-flavored chuckle through the speaker as Mr. Sakura buzzes open the front gate, “Still working on the catch phrase, eh Toshinori?”

“Oh be nice to the boy!” The lady of the house chimes in, birdlike voice piping down to the courtyard, “I think it’s a perfectly nice one dearie. Very clear!”

Toshinori smiles as he takes the steps up to Flat 6, two at a time. Who says he can’t be a hero?

He finishes the gutter cleaning in record time, clearing a Fall’s worth of decaying leaves and sludge from the awning of not just the Sakura’s unit, but the entire west side of the complex. He only falls three times, so his balance must be getting better too. Mrs. Sakura babies him a bit before Toshinori’s toothy smile and assurance that, “It’s all in a hero’s day, ma’am!” convinces her that the boy doesn’t have any (new) brain damage.

Next it’s off to Mrs. Nakamura, who needs help cutting the nails of her (extremely vicious) old cat, Sir Plumpypoo. Toshinori doesn’t lose too much blood. Another sign that he’s getting better! Plus, he finishes with Old Fussface (and the requisite first aid) early enough that he even has time to take out Mrs. Nakamura’s trash and collect her mail. All without deviating from his schedule.

He’s sure these will all be valuable skills when it’s time for more advanced heroing.

His final (and longest) appointment of the afternoon is with the somewhat dour Mrs. Appledon. Uncharitable people call her greedy and cold, but really, Toshinori just thinks she’s a bit lonely. And set in her ways. It must be hard to live alone, widowed by the man you travelled all the way to Japan to love. So Toshinori doesn’t mind giving her a little extra help.

Even if she maybe, *occasionally*, takes advantage of his good nature.

Like today. As always, they head to the local market. And as always, Mrs. Appledon ends up buying more food than she needs, (“*But what if you abandon me next week, Toshinori? Will I just starve?*”) and refusing to pay extra for a cart to lug the groceries back up the block and to her apartment complex (“*Bah, what am I, made of money? Anyway, it’s good exercise for the boy!*”)

Toshinori is honored that Mrs. Appledon is so considerate and supportive of his exercise goals.



Finally, the boy who will be All Might heads home, his walk illuminated by the setting sun. It's lovely really, how the sky turns the canal into a river of glinting rubies and liquid amber. Like all his days, this one was long and exhausting, but deeply rewarding. He chuckles to himself as he kicks a stone up and down the cement, practicing catch phrases and holding imaginary conversations with the adoring public that he doesn't have (yet).

At the crest of the hill that marks the boundary to his neighborhood, he sees a familiar silhouette framed by the dipping sun. He doesn't know the woman, exactly, but he's seen her cape billowing from enough rooftops to know that she's a heck of a hero. He's used to watching people like her from a distance, deeply appreciative but always invisible.

But this time...

This time, it looks like she's looking directly at him.





High Hopes for the Living *Yallmightjr*

The ones who smile are the strongest of all.

The ones who smile are the strongest of all.

The ones who smile are the strongest of all.

Those words tumble over and over in Sorahiko's mind, desperate and grasping, a phantom sob he can still feel soaking into his shoulder.

Nana's last lesson to the brat, and something about it just makes him feel uneasy.

This Symbol of Peace thing... it's a nice thought, Sorahiko can admit. Not something he wants to encourage, but not something he wants to discourage either. Nana had her own approach to heroism, and Sorahiko doesn't want to think ill of the dead. It's very little, what they have left of Nana, and she believed in the brat, entrusted him to Sorahiko, and he can't imagine she'd appreciate him trampling over Toshinori's dream.

It's better than revenge, anyway.

*You want me to just leave? Even though Sensei tried so **hard**—*

"Again," Sorahiko says, and Toshinori groans, rolls over, muscles deflating just a little. He didn't even kick the kid *that* hard. "C'mon, up, try again."

Sorahiko has a less than a year. Less than a year left to pound whatever he can into Toshinori's blonde little head, beat whatever weaknesses and bad habits out of him. There's still so much they don't know about his gifted quirk, so much they won't *ever* know now, and that monster is out there just waiting to snuff out the next wielder of One For All. Sorahiko can't, *won't*, let Nana's precious heir die so easily, and—

And, this grief is still fresh, and maybe that's why he's distracted enough to not see the coiled tension in Toshinori, the split second of unnatural stillness before he surges upward with a cry.

It's still too early for Toshinori to even begin to reach the heights of which Sorahiko and Nana sit, but Sorahiko hesitates just enough for scuffed knuckles to graze his face, a gentle wind scraping his cheek before the excess gust *slams* into it.

His eyes snap shut in reflex, stinging and seared dry, and his head snaps to the side, but if a little thing like temporary blindness could take him out, he wouldn't be able to call himself a Pro for nothing.

Eh, Nana?

Twisting with the fall, the dull thud of a headache beginning to bloom, Sorahiko tucks his feet underneath him and leaps. Wind howls, a missed punch or leg swipe, he doesn't know, but it's

easy enough to hit the training room's ceiling and rebound back with a pressurized *hiss*. His feet hit something slightly squishy, and there's a gargled *urk* as he drives full force into it.

The earth cracks, and everything goes still.

"G-Gran-san," wafts up from his feet, and Sorahiko rubs slowly at his eyes as a shaky breath rises up, and goes down. "Gran-san, that actually hurt, y'know..."

"So?" Sorahiko says, and blinks, the colors falling to rights. He looks down at a dusty and dirty brat that he needs to do better, *be better*. "I'm still going easy on you."

Toshinori mutters, disbelievingly, "*This is going easy?*" and rumbles, like a gurgling belly, and then deflates completely.

Brat, Sorahiko thinks, stumbling off with half a hopped step as Toshinori rolls over onto his back again, arms flinging wide.

Super-strength. An unfair amount of stamina and not too shabby speed. Hardier than just about anyone Sorahiko knows, and still growing like a weed. It's... It's just—

Just, even with all of that, he can see the exhaustion in slitted blue eyes. The boy just doesn't know when to quit, maybe actually doesn't, but when you put on a smile for the world... don't forget that there's more than just a body to a person.

He's still angry. Still scared, hurt and grieving. Sorahiko knows this. Is quite angry himself, hurt and hurting.

Time heals all wounds, yada, yada; Sorahiko's heard it all before. Except, before, he was older when he learned exactly what it means to die a hero, what it means to put his own life on the line. Toshinori is young, too young, but that's life. The harsh truth of the matter is... there *will* be others, and Toshinori can't stumble here, can't rush off and die a fool's death when he's got a long life to live if Sorahiko has anything to say about it.

So.

Sorahiko's digging in deep, pushing Toshinori harder than he's pushed any of his own students with a desperate hope that the kid'll make it because he has less than a year left.

Less than a year, and Toshinori will be out of his shadow's reach.

But, out of Sorahiko's too.

It's a sobering thought, and that's what makes him huff with amusement, turn on a heel. "Let's go eat, I'm feeling generous," Sorahiko says over his shoulder, and he can hear Toshinori scrambling up and onto his feet.

"Really?" he asks, suspicious, but the excitement is there. Like Sorahiko doesn't know he regularly ate Nana out of house and home given the chance. "Like... an all you can eat?"

"Sure, kid," Sorahiko agrees, because they're both all they have now, really.

Sorahiko's never made friends easily, and Toshinori was alone, before Nana. A quirkless boy in a world rapidly filling to the brim with the extraordinary, and a grouchy old man that's already lost too many good people to this, that feels like he's just going to lose yet another if he's not careful enough. The empty space where Nana used to be is glaring, the nebulous but painful feeling it instills nearly indescribable.

So, this Symbol of Peace, thing?

It's a nice thought, and, if anyone could make it happen, it would be Toshinori.

But, Sorahiko can't help but feel it's going to come back and bite them in the ass, regardless of the good outweighing the bad.

When you save the world, who's going to save you? he wonders, maybe just a little bitterly, and ruffles the brat's hair as they both duck for the doorway.

When you save the world, who's going to save you?



Interviewer: Deku, throughout your high school career, it's been apparent that you and former hero, All Might, are close. Would you say he was a personal mentor to you? Do you owe your future success, as you make your pro hero debut, to All Might?

Deku: All Might will always be a hero to me and many others, as well as a mentor. It's no secret I've idolized him. He was the one that made me want to be a hero. And I'm not the only one he's inspired. So, in a way, yes. Without All Might, I probably wouldn't be here doing this interview (He laughs). I wouldn't say I owe it to him. I would say...it's expected of me. Of us all. Everyone making their debut from UA are carrying on his mission, his hopes, his dreams. We're here!

*Excerpt from an interview
with pro hero Deku
Hero Times, May, 20XX*

A Symbol of Peace Starts With Hope

Morgan Yigdal

Coming to America was one of the more outlandish things Toshinori Yagi had decided to do, right alongside accepting Nana's training and obtaining One for All. It wasn't so much the move itself that was risky, it was the fact that Toshinori had *agreed* to leave his home because Gran Torino thought he'd be safer in America while he set out to do what Nana had wanted him to do.

"Those who have a smile on their faces are the strongest after all."

Nana's words always rang through his head whenever he found himself doubting himself or fear and anger threatened to consume him. Even with her gone she still managed to influence him and make him want to do more. To be better.

To be the symbol of peace.

It wasn't easy, not by a long-shot, especially in those first few months in America where everything was foreign. But he did it every day for over two years he'd gotten up, greeted the day with a smile and set out to help those in need. Every action that could help someone in need, he did happily. No task was too mundane or difficult to aid those who needed it.

America was also where he met David Shield. Where he started working with David. Where he may have fallen the slightest bit in love with David.

David Shield, who was constantly looking to create new ways to better society and help those in need. Who always had a kind smile and a soft laugh echoing across his features. David, who enjoyed the quiet moments of sitting in their cramped apartment as much as he enjoyed the action filled chases after villains. Some would no doubt say that he felt drawn to David because they were so alike, but Toshinori knew it was more than that. He liked how they were different, like how David studied sciences and engineering while Toshinori could barely keep up with what David was talking about sometimes.

Perhaps it was more accurate to say he was in love with David Shield.

That love might've made their relationship awkward if they were anyone else, but they just accepted it as something that just *was*. They supported each other in what they did and were there through the toughest times.

Even when they both wished they didn't have to face them.



It had been a long day, one that Toshinori wished would've ended already. There had been a villain attack inside of a strip mall that started fires in the shops. Toshinori and David had arrived at the scene as fast as they could, firefighters already on the scene and working to put out the fires. Toshinori had quickly taken care of the villain before he jumped into the closest building and started getting the civilians stuck inside the buildings out.

There weren't enough firefighters to put out the fires so it was up to Toshinori to get the people to safety. He carried out armfuls of people all of who thanked him profusely once they were safely out of the burning shops. He gave them his signature smile before continuing his duty. Minutes stretched by and the fires were calming down. Everything was going smoothly, as smoothly as these situations could go.

Until it wasn't.

Toshinori took a finally look in the last building to make sure that he'd gotten everyone when he saw her. A little girl, tucked half underneath a knocked over rack of clothes. Toshinori felt his heart drop and made his way over as quickly as he could. He delicately moved the clothes off of her and could barely contain the choked cry that threatened to escape.

The girl's face was mostly spared, aside from the few wisps of burns that trailed up from her neck. The burns themselves weren't as bad as they could have been, but the smoke most have gotten her. Her face was slack, tear tracks evident through the ash on her skin, her chest unmoving. It didn't matter how many he'd saved. Because in the end, he'd failed, hadn't he?

He delicately lifted her, tucking her safely in the crook of his arms and made his way out of the smoldering shop. He did his best to shield the child from view, his focus on making his way to the other victims of the fire. He approached a firefighter who was taking care of the injured and quietly set the girl down on the ground. He pulled his cape off his shoulders and draped it around her, and shared a remorseful look with the firefighter. He didn't know the man's name, but in that moment they knew exactly what the other was thinking.

He turned his attention to finding David amongst the crowd, spotting him beside a few teenagers, making sure they were okay and probably trying out one of his newer gizmos. He caught the man's eyes and tried to put on a smile, but David knew Toshinori and he knew when his smiles weren't genuine. David tilted his head and looked at him with concern; all Toshinori could do was drop his gaze to the girl on the ground, now being properly handled by the EMTs. Toshinori watched as David's face shuttered and his shoulders hunched and all he could do was continue to help those who still needed help. Give people water, help apply an oxygen mask to another, wrap a burn per the EMTs instructions.



They hadn't talked on their way home, the silence settling over them like a shroud that Toshinori wished he could remove with a mighty swing of his fist. They picked at their dinner

before retreating to the balcony of their apartment. The slight breeze made the typically humid climate enjoyable and the roar of traffic and night life hummed from below. It was the most peaceful Toshinori had felt since they'd left the scene of the attack.

"Do you ever feel like what you're doing isn't enough?" David asked.

Toshinori paused his sip of water and slowly brought it down to the railing. "Not enough?" He asked.

"Like no matter how much time or effort you put in, there's still so many people you can't help or you couldn't save," Toshinori flinched as Nana's smile flashed across his vision from that fateful day. "—or villains who got away because you just weren't fast enough."

Toshinori clenched his fists against his thighs. "More often than you'd expect." He suddenly felt so tired and all he wanted to do was go back just minutes ago when the two of them were enjoying the companionable silence with the white noise of the city around them. "But..." He didn't know what to say. There was too much he wanted to say, too many thoughts and actions that fought with each other to get to the forefront of his mind.

"W-what do you do when you start thinking that?" David finally turned to look at him and Toshinori felt his heart clench at the distraught look in David's eyes. "I can't stop thinking about it. About the girl who died in the fire. About the family that are still in the hospital from the villain attack just the other day. About the little boy a month back who looked so grateful and happy when we showed up only to pass away before medical assistance got there." David clenched his eyes shut and shook his head, tears gathering at the edges of his eyes. "What are you supposed to do when it starts eating you alive?"

Toshinori didn't know what to say to that. Not when he hadn't figured it out himself. But he couldn't say nothing, not when David was clearly upset and asking for his help. "You strive to do better." He tried to give his signature smile, but the way David's eyebrows pitched told him it didn't work out that well. "When you can't help them, when you can't save them... You keep going." Toshinori turned back to look at city lights, unable to meet David's gaze. "You get faster, you learn more, you *do better* because there's nothing else you can do. Because stopping isn't an option. Hesitation isn't an option. You can't because that'd mean you could fail to save someone else."

Like Nana.

Nana's words echoed through him and he let them tumble out of his mouth. "Those who have a smile on their faces are the strongest after all." It sounded better when she said it, but he still felt they hit home.

"Smile?" David mumbled, his voice rough from holding back his tears.

“Because that strength gives the people you’re trying to save hope, and sometimes that’s all a hero or anyone can do for them. Give them hope, give them peace even if it’s for the last moments of their life.” Toshinori scrubbed at his eyes brushing away the tears that threatened to fall. “It doesn’t get easier.” He couldn’t lie or tell David anything but the truth. “I don’t think it ever will, but you do your best and keep going.”

“And... that’s enough?”

Maybe. Maybe not. “It has to be.” It *has* to be. He wondered if he could keep going if he was wrong.

David took a shaky breath and nodded his head, turning his attention to the city lights. “Keep improving and giving your all... I can try.”

Toshinori didn’t say anything else and he doubted David wanted to say anymore on the subject. He reached his hand out and laced his fingers with David’s without a word, giving a soft squeeze to the man’s hand.

No more words were spoken that night and if more tears had fallen in the silence neither said anything. Just a show of silent support with the white noise of the city as their soundtrack.



DKYingst
2019

Host: Shouto-san, who was the first person you called when you found out you were the number one hero in Japan?

Shouto: All Might.

Host: Eh?? All Might? Not Endeavor?

Shouto: He was probably fifth.

Host: Ah, haha, you two have always seemed to have a strained relationship. I don't think any of us expected you to mention All Might, though.

Shouto: No? He was one of my teachers at UA. And a hero I think everyone from my class strives to be.

Host: Very True! Several of you are very focused on becoming number one! How do you feel being the first to do so?

Shouto: I feel honored. To share something with a hero like All Might...and even Endeavor. I'm thankful. But I think you misunderstand. It's not really about being number one.

Host: It isn't?

Shouto: No. I like to think of it like...we'll never be satisfied. We always want to be better. The day we stop trying, the day we say we reached a certain goal and think we can take it easy...well, then we're no longer the kind of heroes we aim to be.

Host: And the kind you are trying to be?

Shouto: All Might. Even when he was number one he still worked harder than anyone, still admitted his faults. He was present, not just for the press. He put people at ease and inspired them. For me, it was inspiration as a hero. To others he inspired hope, happiness, a way to live. And even after he retired, and even now, he's still here, doing anything and everything he can for others.

Excerpt from an interview

with pro hero Shouto

Entertainment Tokyo, September, 20XX

Lana (GinevraHolmes)

All Might jolted awake at 2:00 AM, a heavy weight in his chest and crust in his eyes. It wasn't often he woke from just a feeling, but earlier in the day he encountered the same jolt and knew it was going to be a long one. Not a minute later, his phone buzzed with multiple notifications: villain attack in progress, relatively close by if the vibrations under his feet were any indication. Yagi weighed his options: on the one hand he could leave it to the Pro Heroes on shift tonight and attempt to get some sleep or he could get up and try to at least end the fight quickly. He sighed and shook his head, knowing what he was going to do before he even thought about it. He rubbed the grit out of his eyes and he met his reflection, taking in the haggard appearance of only a few hours sleep. Yagi quickly realized a few things: 1) teaching was a difficult task, 2) he definitely did not get enough sleep tonight, and finally 3) his time as All Might was limited to about fifteen minutes, thirty maximum if he pushed it; he was going to have to make this quick.

Spoiler alert: it was not quick.

The combination of little sleep and lack of time as All Might drove Yagi to help finish the fight in 30 minutes. A barrage of well-placed punches displaced the villain enough for the other heroes who had joined the fight, to restrain them, so that Yagi could scamper away. It was a good thing Tsukauchi happened to be on call that evening and caught him heading into the alley. After a quick debrief and a tired, but warm goodnight, Yagi headed back home. He tried to catch a few more hours of sleep before the new school day started, but it seemed to be in vain. After an hour of tossing and turning, he finally got up and got ready for the day. He desperately wished that his tea had caffeine in it when he walked out the door only to find it still dark outside. Yagi sighed and hoped that he could scrounge up some other form of energy boost once he got to the school.

The teachers' lounge was quiet when Yagi entered in his regular form; though he was still tall at 7 foot 2 inches, it was less conspicuous due to his hunched figure. He needed to be quiet and stealthy if he was going to avoid detection, which would have been more difficult at his full stature. Yagi had to lift his feet so they didn't drag and produce the shuffling sound that indicated he had arrived. Tip toeing was not his forte, he knew it, but if he was going to sneak around in the early hours he might just have to learn.

After narrowly avoiding kicking his rubbish bin across the room, he gingerly sat down at his desk and opened his planner to organize his tasks for the day. He held in his laugh as best he could when he found the drunken diagrams of his colleagues, Present Mic and Midnight, or Yamada and Kayama as he was told to call them, littered across the back pages. Toshinori shook his head as he remembered his talkative tipsy companions and tried to interpret what they had planned; or really convinced him to execute. There were swirly lines of every color showing routes and actions, and the more you looked at it, the more complicated it got. He briefly wondered where they got all those colors seemingly out of nowhere, but he had to chalk it up to being a teacher and let it be.

Yagi turned the book around in his hands, looking for a starting point, since there was no set beginning or end to the madness it seemed. It was just meant to be a simple prank, something to lift the spirits of the teachers, but he wasn't sure pulling it on Aizawa was the brightest idea. He had suggested other teachers and even the principal, but no amount of side stepping and distraction techniques could sway them. He knew he was being dragged into some sort of friendly rivalry, but a feeling of finally belonging to something made him feel warm and he easily gave in. So in order to pull the prank off, he had to speak at length with Aizawa's two closest friends and determine what his limit was. It wouldn't do anyone any good if the rarely emotive teacher became angry and ignored him during lessons due to his misjudgment; someone could get hurt.

What Yagi came up with was simple, if not ridiculous, but he still smiled when he thought about it. Yamada and Kayama had decided long ago, after a few slight mishaps during their years at UA, that they would never touch Aizawa's sleeping bag again. Yamada had hidden it once and ended up with bags under his eyes rivaling Aizawa's before it was returned. Kayama grabbed it once and decorated it with flowers and cats before hanging it in the hallway before class. They say she barely lived to tell the tale and still has a small scar from where Aizawa used his capture weapon a little too harshly during pursuit. Fortunately they all lived through it, but now it was Yagi's turn and he wasn't so sure he would.

Taking a few deep breaths and a sip of herbal tea to center himself, Yagi dug into his desk drawers as carefully as he could to find the hot glue gun. He stared at the ominous, yet immobile object, and hoped everything would go smoothly. He let out a loud sigh and sat back in his chair, stretching out his legs as far as he could. He froze when he heard a slight rustling from the couch on the other side of the teacher lounge. He slowly rose to find out who was here, having an idea, but wanting to confirm all the same. Seeing a piece of a grey material hanging over the edge made Yagi feel both anxious and excited at the same time. He wasn't originally going to pull the prank until the next week, but he also didn't want to waste the opportunity presented to him.

Sitting back down, he began to prepare: shutting his planner, plugging in the glue gun, and again sipping his tea. The organization calmed him a bit as he waited for the glue to heat. He chuckled as he thought back to this morning, fighting the villain made him less nervous than a small prank. He felt silly, whether it was about his childish antics or the possible repercussions, he didn't know, but he was going to see it through. He is the number one hero for a reason after all.

Yagi slowly sipped his tea while he went over the plan in his mind. As he finished the last dregs swirling around his cup, he hovered his hand over the glue gun to see if it was hot enough. He knew he had a limited amount of time before the glue hardened again so he had to be quick once it was unplugged. Hopefully he won't glue his hands together in the process, not only would that be a problem, but it would also burn like hell. He also hoped his hands would be steady enough to not drip it on his unsuspecting victim; that would definitely be a rude wake up call.

Taking a deep breath to steady his nerves, Yagi quickly unplugged and wrapped the cord in a knot, preventing it from dangling and getting tangled around his feet. Lifting his feet once again to reduce the noise of his steps, he crept across the teachers' lounge towards the couch. Coming around the back of the furniture, Yagi spotted Aizawa stretched out on his back in his sleeping bag; the perfect positioning for him to complete his task. Yagi tucked his bangs behind his ears with his remaining hand before leaning over Aizawa to reach his target, the sleeping bags zipper. Just as Yagi's hand breached Aizawa's personal bubble, a few things happened that caught him completely off guard. Aizawa's eyes shot open causing Yagi to drop the glue gun on his shoe in shock and not thirty seconds later he was hanging upside down from the rafters facing the floating mane of one Aizawa Shota.

"All Might? What are you doing?"

"Ah ha good morning Aizawa, and please call me Yagi." He left out a half laugh followed by a few coughs.

"It's too early for you." Aizawa's voice came out quiet as he flipped Yagi's feet back towards the ground to stand upright. "Explain."

Yagi blushed and tried to move his arm to rub behind his neck, but the capture weapon was still tight around his torso. He briefly thought about activating his quirk, but huffed another laugh when he realized transforming in front of the Pro Hero Eraserhead was the opposite of helpful. He sagged a bit in the capture weapon and looked to Aizawa with a tired smile.

"I couldn't sleep so I decided to get to school early to catch up on my work, but I saw you sleeping here and decided to take a chance. It backfired, as you can see." Yagi gestured to himself as much as he could with his arms plastered to his sides.

"On what?" Aizawa's head tilted just a bit in confusion.

"Uh, well, it was meant to be something fun and harmless."

Aizawa held up his hand to stop Yagi's explanation. "Did Yamada put you up to it or was it Kamaya?"

"No?"

"You don't seem so sure, All Might."

Yagi's lips tipped up at one side. "Yagi, please, and though Pres-, I mean, Yamada and Kamaya did help, it was my idea. I wanted something to lift everyone's spirits, however I apologize it was at your expense. I did not mean to offend you."

Aizawa huffed and Yagi suspiciously thought it may have been his version of a laugh. "You don't need to be so diplomatic Yagi, it is their version of an initiation. There is no need for you to apologize."

"I'm sorry, I don't think I understand. Initiation?"

"Welcome to UA, you're now officially one of us."

Yagi chuckled, "Ah I see. Well, I'm glad it's official now."

Aizawa nodded and began to let Yagi out of the capture weapon, who let out a few coughs upon being released. Yagi went to take a step and wobbled a bit, he was steadied by hand on his shoulder.

"Are you alright Yagi?"

"Just tired Aizawa. I only had a few hours of sleep last night."

"Is our class this afternoon the only one you have today?"

"Yes, why?"

Aizawa turned away and Yagi saw his hair lift as he swung his capture weapon sharply in a complicated pattern. Yagi's eyes widened as a shape emerged from the many folds of fabric; it was, a hammock?

"You have time to take a nap, so take one."

"What about your weapon?"

"I have a spare in my desk."

"Oh, well, alright. Thank you Aizawa." Yagi was delighted and turned away from the make-shift bed to find Aizawa already wrapped up in his sleeping bag on the couch. Yagi took off his shoes before attempting to climb into the hammock. As he settled back to rest, he thinks he hears a quiet 'You're welcome All Might.' from the couch. It brings a smile to his face knowing that things are finally falling into place as a teacher at UA and as an added bonus, he may have made a few more friends along the way.



"All Might? Hello?" a timid voice called from the doorway of the teachers' lounge. Midoriya peaked in to see if he could find his mentor. They had lunch plans that day before class, but Yagi hadn't met him in the usual spot. He entered the lounge and finally spotted some yellow tufts of hair sticking out from an odd looking cocoon? As Midoriya approached the shape, he realizes it was a hammock and smiled. He spoke louder this time knowing he had to get his teachers attention so he could refuel a bit before class.

"All Might? It's lunch time."

Yagi yawned and rolled over to climb out of the comfortable contraption and address his student. "Hello, young Midoriya. I apologize for not coming to see you sooner. Did I miss our lunch?"

"No, we still have some time. Are you ok? I've never seen you sleep at school before."

"Ah yes, I didn't get much sleep last night, but I was lucky Aizawa was here when I came in early."

Midoriya eyed the hammock and realized it was made with Eraserheads capture weapon. Tamping down the urge to get a closer look at how it was made, he walked over to sit on the couch, and his hands. As he sat he kicked something out from under the table and reached down to pick it up.

"A glue gun?" he wondered out loud. "Is this yours All Might?"

Yagi let out a quick bark of laughter and reached out for the glue gun as he sat next to Midoriya to eat. "It is. Do you want to hear its story?" Midoriya nodded enthusiastically and Yagi recalled the tale of his morning's misadventure.

Mom



LG
2019

"A lot of people didn't expect me to be up here. Some of you watching probably think it's fitting. I was there when All Might died, you think, why wouldn't I be here when we say goodbye to Yagi Toshinori too?"

That's the point. Why wouldn't I be here? All Might saved me and not just on that fateful night in Kamino. He gave me purpose, he gave me a dream. He motivated me, helped mold me, mentored me, listened to me in a way most others wouldn't.

I was close enough to the Symbol of Peace to really see him.

He was the reason I wanted to become a hero, why I wanted to win. But it wasn't until I got to know the man himself that I started to really learn what it meant to be a hero and, more importantly, to be a better person.

All Might didn't die in Kamino. Yagi Toshinori isn't dead. He's here. With me. With you. With anyone who remembers him and carries on any of his teachings or tries to live as he did.

Help one another. No one is too insignificant or too important to save. No one is too weak or too strong to assist someone else or give them hope or encouragement. No one is worthless. No one is perfect.

As long as we remember everything All Might stood for, he's here. And we'll win."

*Excerpt from Bakugou Katsuki's eulogy,
Funeral of Yagi Toshinori "All Might"*
21XX



Because You Are Here

Dana

“Ah, A-All Might?!”

Toshinori entered the hospital room quietly, unable to keep the slight smile from tracing his lips at the voice. The space was small but homey, with blissful near silence; a refreshing, far cry from the hospital wards that were his own worst enemies. He made his way to the bedside, sitting down in the nearby chair, and making sure to take in everything around him as he did so.

Within moments, just by looking, he could learn so much about the person whose life he would touch. It was a small, bittersweet upside to how familiar with it all he was.

“Hello there, my girl; it’s a pleasure to meet you. And who might you be?”

“I-I’m Mirai, sir!” the brunette in front of him exclaimed, her eyes shining with adoration that was nostalgically all-too-familiar. She looked to be in her late teens or just after, her body and facial features thin, betraying the state of her health, much the same as his own. There was a small oxygen tube around her nose, and she wore the usual hospital wires and sensors, with various other machines nearby, but she sat up in bed with relative calm, a handheld game in her lap that was now ignored. “Oh my god, I’ve always wanted to meet you, but I never thought it would actually happen...! And now that you’re here and I... I-I really don’t know what to say! ...Buh, uh... What brought you to me?”

“Do not worry about any formalities, Young Mirai,” Toshinori chuckled. “Nothing will offend me; take your time. As for why I’m here, well... this was just one room I ended up in. I try to see as many people as I can, always.”

Mirai blushed ever so slightly, her smile widening. “Of course... Thank you, so much, for taking the time, with everything you have going on... It makes me so... so *happy*.”

She trailed off, her breath audibly shuddering and eyes now staring into the distance, and Toshinori softened. Much of his hospital visits were spent with young children, who could not yet process the full weight of what ailed them, wanting only to play, and sometimes with adults with whom he had memorable conversations with about the world, life and about the past. But it was also not uncommon to come across those in between, young adults around her age, who felt lost or even hopeless, who relied on him for comfort, *reassurance*, instead of merely a distraction. This took on an even greater meaning once his true form was revealed, and his support was no longer simply All Might’s heroic encouragement, but empathy from *Toshinori Yagi*, who *understood* so much of what they were going through. It had taken time for him to feel comfortable enough to come back regularly, baring his vulnerabilities out in the open in the one place where children needed the Symbol of Peace the *most*, after he had *lied* to them for those six years about himself (preached things to them that he didn’t even hold *himself* to)...

but in the end, there was no place on Earth that accepted him as he was now more wholeheartedly.

He had thought he would no longer be a source of hope, the hope and strength that only All Might could give. But that couldn't be further from the truth, and their continued excitement and joy at seeing him, the knowledge that they still wanted his presence, never failed to move him.

"...I am glad to be here, my girl."

Mirai smiled weakly, turning to the side to let out a muffled cough, then composing herself quickly as she faced him once more. "I-I'm glad I stayed long enough to see you. I'll be well enough to go home soon, it's just another bad cold going around that I happened to catch... I'm just relieved it's late enough into it that I'm not putting you at risk, sir."

Her face was concerned, for *him*. Toshinori's eyes widened, his lips trembling slightly.

("No All Might, you can't come in! I can handle being sick, but I can't get you sick, no matter what!")

So many times he had heard something similar; from Izuku, from the other students, Tsukauchi, everyone. Wanting to keep him safe at all costs. But hearing the same from those here... it was always more than he could bear.

"I will be fine, I promise," he finally whispered, managing a small, grateful smile, as he reached out and laid a hand atop hers. "You are so kind to worry about me... Thank you. But all that matters to me is that you get well."

The hospital was practically his second home; soon enough, it would be his only one. He had lived his life, and no more could be done for him. Their lives were more important, always.

There was a small snuffle, and Mirai gazed down at their hands, that were vastly different in size. She held onto his tentatively, almost shyly, then after a few moments squeezed tighter, her face still hidden. Toshinori kept silent, letting her simply hold him, the rubbing movements of her tiny fingers soothing himself just as much as her.

"...I know you probably hear this all the time, but... I want to tell you how much you inspire me, All Might, and why."

Letting him go, the girl let out a deep sigh, running her fingers through her hair as she closed her eyes. After a few moments, she started again, poised and calm.

"Growing up, I wasn't actually that into heroes. Ah, n-no offense!" Toshinori shook his head gently, motioning for her to go on. "I admired and appreciated them all, of course, and that especially includes you...! But I wasn't like a huge fan or anything... I had other things in mind.

"I wanted to pursue art; I still do. So I was and am working towards that goal. My quirk is pretty underwhelming, and ironically, it's kind of difficult for me to use it because I have trouble walking... so I'm pretty much quirkless. But I never really felt sorry for myself or upset about things... I just went with it. It's my normal. It's pretty bad when I get sick, but that actually

doesn't happen very often... Overall, I have stuff I struggle with, but I'm happy most of the time."

Quirkless and sickly... a social death sentence for anyone. Yet here she speaks of it, so calm and untroubled... so carefree.

"...But I started feeling a bit differently once I got older, in the last few years," Mirai continued, frowning, and looking down into her lap. "I've gotten used to not having any friends, besides online ones, but I started to finally feel lonely... just staying in my house all the time, with nowhere to go and no one to spend time with. I started resenting my appearance and everything that makes me different, because it's a barrier keeping me from easily making friends. Making me look unapproachable and weird; closed-off, even. I started trying to go out more to places I enjoy, trying to push myself out of my comfort zone, and it's fun, but it only made me realize just how much I stand out like a sore thumb, and I hated how impossible it felt for me to just *talk* to new people, compared to everyone else. When I was younger I didn't really care as much, but now I'm pretty much an adult, and all of this just hit me all of a sudden; I started feeling like things were going to be like this forever... It left me in a slump for a long time, especially when my health got worse than usual for a while."

His memory flashed back to those days, so long ago, when he had lain in bed, alone and deathly ill and in despair, *hateful* and *frustrated*; the day when he had impulsively done away with every mirror in his home, wishing never to have to look at himself ever again; the days when he had been forced outside for errands like *this*, drowning in his body and wanting to claw his skin away as people *stared*, eating away at his very **soul**.

".....I understand."

The words came out as barely a whisper, before his mind had even realized he'd said them. A moment later, he felt soft pressure on his hand, and he gazed up to see that she was now the one to reach out, Mirai's expression a mix of surprise and sadness, tears lining her eyes.

Toshinori could not hold her gaze. Even after how far he'd come, after all this time, admitting such things to the people he was supposed to be *strong* for still felt so alien, so selfish, and **wrong**.

"...I'm s-sorry, my girl; you shouldn't have to feel that way... go through such pain."

"Neither should you."

Immediately, he bowed his head even further, his eyes burning that oh-so-familiar burn.

What are you doing, you fool? You're supposed to be comforting her, but instead she's trying to comfort you!

(that's how it always was, though, wasn't it? Each and every time, with his dear boy)

"Because... Because when I saw you, on TV, in your final fight, back then, everything changed for me... it meant *everything* to me."

Here it goes. Toshinori forced himself to look back up, into her eyes, despite how much his heart ached (*yet warmed, yet cried, yet suffocated, yet **loved***)

“All Might, I’m sure... I k-know this isn’t what you wanted, for yourself, and for any of us. No one should have to suffer like you have, of course I of all people know that... I wish that you h-hadn’t had to live like this in secret... for so long... someone so selfless and kind and *wonderful* as you, just for... j-just for *us*.”

Her voice was breaking, and he could scarcely breathe, because yes they all thanked him but never did they say *this*. “...It was my duty,” Toshinori barely managed to protest, his own voice cracking painfully. “It was... my fault, that this is how things are... My fault that I can no longer protect you. That you had to learn that even I am not immune to those ugly feelings you described... I failed you all.”

“But that’s where you’re wrong. Don’t you see? You haven’t failed *any* of us, All Might... Isn’t that what everyone has shown you?”

Yes... somehow, over and over again. Even if my suffering was my own punishment, for destroying my hero career due to my foolish need for revenge. Even if my weakness means that countless others will die, that I could have saved.

Despite that, from it all, if I’ve still somehow brought goodness to the world, then I...

“When you were fighting that villain, that night, everyone was cheering you on, they *loved* you, just as much as they always have... and you looked... y-you looked kind of like *me*. And seeing it, I-I... it made me realize that *I* can be loved just as I am, too. Made me want to try harder... made me *believe* in myself.”

No matter how many times he heard such a sentiment, despite the churning torrent of conflicting feelings in his heart, it never failed to leave Toshinori *breathless*, touched beyond *words*. Never in a million years had he ever thought that anyone would like him *more* this way, would ever feel more comforted, be given *hope*, by his feeble, grotesque, unwelcoming appearance... what was nothing more than an endless source of shame and humiliation for him.

And yet, it was the very reason why so many people like the girl before him now needed him.

*(why, he was told, a young quirkless boy who had once felt strange, and weak, and most of all, lonely, had clung to him so hard all those years ago, and for the first time in his life, felt truly **happy**)*

“No matter what I look like... no matter what my body does different from others... quirk or not... I can still find happiness. Can still have friends.” Mirai, tears streaming down her face, squeezed Toshinori’s hand tightly in her own, gripping it as if she wanted to hold onto it forever, her eyes closed as she wore a soft smile. “Even if I still have trouble... Even if my uncertainty and self-consciousness never fully go away... I can live proudly, knowing that it’s what I deserve, seeing how beloved you are, and seeing how much you have done for us all,

even while just as weak. I may not be able to do anything as grand as you, but I can certainly achieve something... Just as so many others like us can.

"Thank you, All Might... You're my hero."

("You're still my hero, All Might, and you always will be. Thank you, for letting 'Deku' live...!")

Toshinori reached out, pulling the small girl to his chest as gently as he could, choking back blood and tears.

"...You're beautiful, Young Mirai. Never forget that," he whispered, stroking her hair, his breath as shuddering and raspy as her own was. "Your words mean m-more to me than you could ever know... Thank *you*, my girl. I don't deserve such... such wonderful people like you."

".....You too, A-All Might... Inside and out... Don't you f-forget, either."

Through his emotion, a small chuckle escaped his lips. Of course he'd be a hypocrite, not to listen to his own words. But he was trying, he really was. Thanks to everyone who cared about him.

"I won't. ...Luckily, I'm surrounded by *(family)* friends every day, who always remind me."

"Good... I'm g-glad you have them, All Might."

"So am I... So am I." *More than I could ever say.* "...And all of you, as well."

For a while longer, he held her. She continued to hug him with all the fragile strength she possessed, conveying to him years of emotions that could not be put into words. When Toshinori finally let go, he continued grasping her hand, as he talked to her, interrupted by the occasional cough. There was much Mirai wanted to say, and he listened to it all, knowing that such sentiments were ones that she had never shared with anyone but him.

It was an honor, albeit heartbreaking, that they confided in him. But as long as he was their pillar, of a new kind now, he would support them with everything he had. With this body, that to them was stronger than any other.

"Toshinori!"

A familiar voice reached his ears, and Toshinori perked up, turning from where he sat to see curly green hair, and a freckled face. "Izuku, my boy!"

"I finished up, so I went looking for you," Izuku said, his eyes shining as they landed on Mirai. It was a look that he would never mistake, that glisten, and Toshinori smiled softly. "I'll be right there."

His protégé nodded, stepping back outside to give them privacy, and Toshinori moved his attention back to the bed. "I should be going, Young Mirai."

"Of course," she replied, her expression betraying only a hint of sadness. "Thank you, so much... for everything. I'm so grateful I got to meet you, and tell you..... I-I'll never forget this day."

Once again, Mirai took a moment to wipe her eyes, and Toshinori squeezed her hands tight, leaning up and pressing a gentle kiss to her forehead.

"Thank you, as well, my sweet girl. I meet so many of you, but each and every one of you is precious and unforgettable to me... It's your words, your gratitude, your kindness that I don't always feel I deserve... that keep me going.

"Take care of yourself, and know that I will always be proud of you."

Thin arms reached around his neck once more, barely, and he allowed himself to be pulled close, listening to the tearful but undeniable happiness in her voice.

"I w-will... And you too, All Might... Please keep... keep living for us."

I will, Toshinori thought, and replied, as he embraced her for a final time, and then moved away, waving as he left her room, closing the door quietly behind him.

Beside him as they walked down the hall, Izuku talked emotionally about the people he had seen, and Toshinori watched him, a soft smile on his face, his heart at peace.

Yes, no matter what, I will live.

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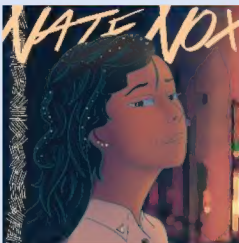
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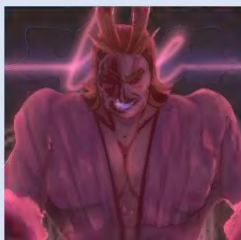


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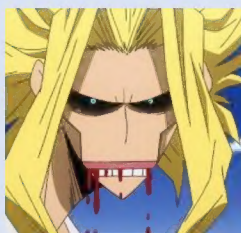


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All Might divider from the All Might Emojis Discord Server